

# Zuppa Inglese

Ron Arad  
Sebastian Bergne  
Nigel Coates  
Nick Crosbie  
Tom Dixon  
Dunne & Raby  
Wayne Hemingway  
Morag Myerscough

*Zuppa Inglese* explores the ideas, approaches and inspirations of eight British designers whose disciplines range from architecture, fashion, and graphics, to furniture and product design.

*Zuppa Inglese* is sponsored by BLUEPRINT magazine, in association with The British Council.

**BLUEPRINT**  The British Council

May 15–June 26, 1999

opening reception,  
Monday, May 17, 1999, 7–9 p.m.

Storefront for Art and Architecture 97 Kenmare Street New York NY 10012

*Zuppa Inglese* explores the ideas, approaches and inspirations of eight British based designers who's disciplines range from architecture, fashion, and graphics, to furniture and product design. The exhibition aims to provide insight into the much celebrated UK design scene, but instead of focusing on the final product, the designers reveal and represent things that inspire their work. As well as presenting personal views and design approaches, *Zuppa Inglese* identifies a number of common issues that inform the design scene in the 1990s—design and mass production, collaboration and interdisciplinarity, manufacturing investigations, and most importantly a critical, even radical undercurrent that uses design to change and move forward the territory of culture in relation to wider social, political and economic conditions.

To find out what goes on inside their heads, *Blueprint* interviewed the designers in their studios and edited the results into a film shown at last year's Milan Furniture Fair. The same designers were then each asked by the British Council's curator Alicia Pivaro to "customize" a travelling showcase, filling it with material to illustrate the creative processes behind their work. These special flight cases, designed by Billings Jackson with graphics by Studio Myerscough, will be on view at Storefront from May 15 to June 26, 1999.

#### Dunne & Raby

"We are fascinated by the more sinister potential of products and the ways in which they might be misused," explains Fiona Raby, one half of the Royal College of Art-based design and research duo Dunne & Raby. Trained as an architect, Raby works with industrial designer Anthony Dunne to explore the relationships people have with electronic products and how the aesthetic and functional possibilities of these products might be expanded. In their flight case they have included examples of real products, among them a baby listening device, which form the subject of their research. Also on show is a model illustrating their project "Tunable Cities" in which they mapped the spaces in the city occupied by radio waves of bugs and baby listening devices. Perhaps the most intriguing object in their case is a pair of knickers—described by their manufacturer Less EMF as a "personal protection device"—which defends the wearer against invasive radio waves.

#### Tom Dixon

Self-taught furniture and product designer and design director of Habitat, Tom Dixon says that he is more interested in the activity and process of design than the end product. To illustrate this process, he has filled his case with found objects and existing products—all displayed on little acrylic spikes—which together form the inspiration for his Star light. Maquettes for the finished product, marked with the designer's dimensions and scribbles, are included in the case.

#### Sebastian Bergne

Industrial designer Sebastian Bergne finds inspiration for his work in everyday objects which can be improved or which inform the form of his own products. In his *Zuppa Inglese* case he has included a plastic petrol can as an example of the sort of everyday product that inspired his polypropylene Lio light and a collection of wine bottles as references for his Can carafe and glasses. Crude calculators and filing trays are shown alongside his elegant solutions to show how products can be improved with a little design thinking. However, Bergne is keen to emphasize the subtlety of his brand of design. "I like a certain amount of anonymity—that people enjoy the things I've designed without necessarily knowing who designed them," he says.

#### Nick Crosbie

Crosbie, the 27-year-old director of the successful design and manufacturing studio Inflate, says his work is the result of playing with materials and processes. Of his early products he says: "I'd been making the same mistake as other people—you try and draw something and then try and make it, and it doesn't work." Instead, he says, the creative process for him is inspired by what already exists (the vintage inflatables in the show case), collaboration (the case includes sketches by his partners and contributors) and in experimentation. The Inflate fruit bowl is a good example of this. "I was making a shape for something else and then I welded three of them together and thought, 'That makes a fruit bowl,'" he says. Visitors to the *Zuppa Inglese* show are invited to contribute to the Inflate case by drawing or writing in the sketchbooks provided.

#### Nigel Coates

The celebrated architect and professor of architecture at the Royal College of Art has illustrated his approach to design by showing how his winning entry for the Concept House competition, built at the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1998, has now generated a whole series of related products. The models of the house in the case are made of plates shaped like oysters, the latest in the collection of "Oyster" products inspired by the house (others include the Oyster dining furniture for Lloyd Loom). For Coates this interconnection between objects and buildings, the generating of one thing by another, is central to the design process. "It's a very British way of working," he says, "to use the things around you in an inventive way."

#### Wayne Hemingway

A childhood spent in suburban Lancashire and the culture of punk are among Wayne Hemingway's inspirations for his fashion company Red or Dead. "Our aim was to be the first company that offered design, ie innovation and creativity, to the masses by making it affordable," he says. His case for *Zuppa Inglese* contains clothes from his Red is Dead collections as well as a selection of diverse objects which he keeps for inspiration (among them are a tray with puppies on it and a doll loo-roll cover). "We keep the office full of things we find at car boot sales—things that are kitsch and fun," he says.

#### Morag Myerscough

Graphic designer Morag Myerscough has worked on projects ranging in scale from a Swatch watch to a massive hoarding for a building site in the City of London. "My aim is to work with lots of different designers—architects, artists, and film makers—because graphic design should integrate many disciplines," she says. The inspiration for her work comes from sources including found images, books, and the city around her. For her display case she has commissioned a system of nine rotating mini-cases which are installed like an abacus. In each mini-case she has displayed a range of favorite images, graphics and other 2-D ephemera which inform her work.

#### Ron Arad

Ron Arad, architect and professor of industrial design and furniture at the Royal College of Art, adopts a cavalier attitude towards his own design work. His Camden studio is like the workshop of an eccentric inventor, filled with material samples and models. His products—the famous Book Worm bookcase among them—are inspired by fine art and playful experimentation. For *Zuppa Inglese* he has installed his latest chair—the Super Plastic Elastic chair for Kartell—alongside a dismantled version of the same piece. The idea is to show how each component is conceived and assembled.

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#### Storefront News Items

The Storefront Prize student competition has been postponed until January 2000. Competition brief will be available at that time. If you would like to receive information on the competition when it becomes available, please let us know.

#### Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of Storefront and we would like to extend a special thanks to all of the people that have helped us this year. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Sarah Herda at 212.431.5795. Internships are also available.

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May 15–June 26, 1999

opening reception, May 17, 1999, 7–9 p.m.

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Saturday, 12 - 6pm

Special Hours: The gallery will be open May 15, 16, 17, and 18 from 1–6 pm during the International Contemporary Furniture Fair. After May 18, normal gallery hours will resume.

Storefront for Art and Architecture 97 Kenmare Street, New York, NY 10012  
Tel. 212.431.5795 Fax 212.431.5755 E-mail info@storefrontnews.org

Free Admission  
Wednesday–Saturday 12–6 p.m.  
To prearrange group visits please call  
212.431.5795

#### Directions

Storefront is located at the corner of Kenmare Street and Cleveland Place. Trains: 6 Train at Spring Street, NR Trains at Prince Street & the BDFQ Trains at Broadway/Lafayette

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Founded in 1982, Storefront for Art and Architecture is a nonprofit organization committed to presenting and communicating innovative positions on art, architecture and design through provocative and interdisciplinary public programs, in the form of exhibitions, conferences, publications and special projects.

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